

### **Implications for Secondary School Principals**

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*The school system is a green pasture for inexhaustible investigations for the purpose of enhancing academic achievement. The reason is that factors and variables within the confines of educational activities appear also to be inexhaustible. One such factor that attracted an investigation is 'administrative stress' as it affects secondary school principals. This paper presents the results of a research conducted on the subject. Five hypotheses were proposed. The results revealed that inadequate funding; inadequate school facilities, work overload and poor conditions of service generated administrative stress for principals. The major implication of these results is that educational institutions should be adequately funded as other management variables will thereby be taken care of.*

### **Introduction**

The school is an organization with a mandate to promote teaching and learning. Its setting is expected to incorporate facilities and other educational resources that can enhance goal achievements. The delineation of schools into categories of primary, secondary and tertiary is an acknowledgment of the varying learning goals expected to be achieved at the various levels. Secondary education is that which children receive after primary education and before the tertiary stage. Its broad goals are to prepare children for a useful living within the society, and for higher education (FRN, 2004). The goals of secondary schools are facilitated by the principals who are the defacto heads. Certain administrative elements such as a clear understanding of aims and objectives, hierarchy of authority, unity of command, division of labour etc. aid the principal in accomplishing his tasks.

The effective management of human and material resources for goal achievement is the responsibility of the principal. In addition, he must enhance other activities such as staff and students welfare, develop and implement educational programmes, provide proper instruction, school community relations, discipline and proper record keeping. Furthermore, Peretomode (1995) points out even more responsibilities for the school principal such as student's admissions, proper documentation of school finances and the creation of a conducive learning environment. As if these fundamental problems are not enough Ehiamezor (1985) notes that the Nigerian principal is further faced with the problems of large schools that have become complex to manage. He rightly identifies the source of the principals' problems to high school enrolment, poor funding, high costs of education, the impact of modern technology, growing political influence on education, inadequate teaching staff etc. These phenomena put pressure and challenge the effectiveness with which the principal performs his administrative functions. The resultant effect of too much pressure on the principal is occupational stress which Adesope (2000) attributes to as a natural way to cope with challenges in the environment.

A study of 590 teachers and principals in the United Kingdom revealed that salaries, poor human relations among staff, inadequate school buildings and equipment, teaching load, inadequate training of teachers, large classes, status of the teaching profession were the main sources of dissatisfaction (Otamiri, 2000). The source noted also that a study of 445 secondary school teachers and head teachers (principals) in California identified sources of stress to include excessive clerical work, supervisory duties at school, inadequate salary and negative attitudes towards learning.

These revelations show that the subject of stress in relation to the school principal is not new. The present study based on the Nigerian experience is a further contribution to the existing body of knowledge.

The focus of the study is on administrative stress in

relation to secondary school principals in Rivers State of Nigeria. To give the study the necessary direction, the following hypotheses are proposed to guide the investigation:

- (i) There is no significant relationship between inadequate funding and principals' administrative stress.
- (ii) No significant relationship exists between inadequate facilities and principals' administrative stress.
- (iii) There is no significant relationship between poor conditions of service and the administrative stress of principals.
- (iv) There is no significant relationship between insufficiently trained teachers and principals' administrative stress.
- (v) There is no significant relationship between work overload and principals' administrative stress.

### **Conceptual Support**

This work is premised on motivation and job satisfaction. The absence or inadequacies of these concepts often precipitate occupational stress. 'Motivation', according to Golembiewski (1973, p. 597) 'refers to the degree of readiness of an organism to pursue some designated goal and implies the determination of the nature and locus of the forces inducing the degree of readiness'. Maslow (1954) advanced the need-hierarchy theory that identifies five levels of human needs namely; physiological, safety, affection, esteem, and self actualization. The staff in every organization aspires to satisfy their needs and consequently put pressures on the organizations' leaders to oblige them with maximum resources that will enable them satisfy such needs. In the absence of adequate resources and mounting pressure of demands the leaders of organizations become stressed up because of their inability to cope with such demands.

Inadequate motivation engenders job dissatisfaction which Locke (1976) refers to as a situation where there is lack of

pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences. This is contrary to job satisfaction which generally means the fulfillment acquired by experiencing various job activities and rewards (Wanous and Lawler III, 1972).

The conditions under which principals in Nigeria function that do not guarantee adequate resources and student over-population are vulnerable to stress situations. Literatures have exposed a number of factors that are responsible for job dissatisfaction with the capacity to engender stress. It is the interest of this study to isolate those factors capable of affecting school principals adversely which are regarded as producing administrative stress.

#### **Related Literature**

Economic, social and political factors have increasingly induced stress among workers and non-workers regardless of geographical boundaries. Stressful situations have become ubiquitous among academics, industrial, business, social and other occupational groups. Denga (1991) was concerned over the issue of stress hence he noted:

If workers' health is their wealth, experts and specialists on stress such as medical personnel, psychologists, psychiatrics, counselors and educational managers must not remain complacent in the face of the present alarming disability which stress is inflicting on workers.

Stress may not necessarily be a dreadful and visible disease like cancer, diabetes, cholera and other infectious diseases. However, a stressful life has a debilitating effect on workers' performances and may lead to terminal dreadful diseases or such that can render the victims non-functional. Stress is a common phenomenon of every staff in the school organization. According to Adesope (2000), stress is akin to pressure. It is a natural way of coping with challenges in one's environment. Stress is a specific biological term used to relate biological, psychological and social tensions to diseases and disease

conditions. Lazarus (1976) and Selye (1976) while agreeing that stress is a physical and psychological reactions of the body to demanding stimulus events also admit that various individuals react differently to demanding stimulus events. Denga (1996) identifies stress to be an occupational strain, job stress, work tension, burn out or job demand. Furthermore, stress is a product of environmental pressure such as work overload or role conflict on the individual. In their work Denga and Ekpo (1994, p.3) agree that stress is:

An alteration of physiological and psychological homeostasis (equilibrium or balance) resulting from internal and external job pressures that are perceived as threats to the individual's well being or self-esteem.

Chief executives of organizations including school heads suffer executive diseases such as hypertension, heart diseases, mental illness, depressed digestive and sexual process etc. Ikeme (1988) confirms that stress results in poor blood circulation. As a stressful condition prolongs the body's coping mechanism becomes destroyed leading to physical and mental diseases. In this process the executive diseases manifest in people including school principals. Although Denga (1991) suggests that many administrators suffer stress due to refusal to delegate functions, Otamiri (2002) attributes principals' stress to poor organizational climate. Other opinions believe that the prevalent cases of examination malpractice, cultism, drug abuse, immorality, fall in academic standards etc are conditions that stress up school administrators. These observations are endorsed by Ezeocha (1985) who saw the danger ahead and warned thus:

From what has already been written, it is clear that most of our secondary school principals are operating within some very problematic situations. The catalogue of problems facing them include lack of finance, communication channel, community interest, manpower,

etc. This is to say, however, that we do not have smooth running systems of education.

The word stress, according to Ikeme (1988) derives from a Latin word 'stingers' meaning to draw tight. Ivancevich (1980) believes that the word 'stress' and its various forms have existed for centuries. They further believe that the origin of stress as a modern form of environmental changes with the capacity to disrupt the organism could be traced to the middle of the 19th Century. Stress refers to the internal condition of an individual which can experience failure because of tension, anxiety, producing a condition that could endanger the health of a normal person. As noted earlier Adesope (2000) confirms that stress is a psychological event which can have an effects on individuals anywhere and at anytime.

Kahn and Quin (1970) among others have identified job stress as a demand from any aspect of work that has extreme or noxious characteristics. In their view, stress occurs when an individual experiences obstacles in his efforts to fulfill strong needs or values.

The interest of this study is on executive stress which is common with the chief executives of organizations. Akinnusi (1995) opines that generally stress is most severe among people who held executive positions because of the demands on them which culminate in pressure. Nigeria presents an interesting case study for executive stress and the school principal is the choice of this work. In Nigeria, principals must have served as teachers for many years before they are so appointed. Achalu and Udoh (1995) have documented the sources of occupational stress particularly in Nigeria. They include; poor working conditions, work overload, work under-load, physical danger, job dissatisfaction, promotion problems, lack of job security, poor relationship at work, poor organizational structure and climate, among others. According to Ho (1980) similar factors are responsible for occupational stress in both developed and developing countries.

In line with the findings of Uzoeshi (1992) such factors

as inadequate funds, poor school facilities, poor conditions of service, inadequate trained teachers, work overload among others remain suspect in the matter of principals' administrative stress in Nigeria.

### **Methodology**

Nigeria comprises of 36 State and a Federal Capital territory. Rivers State was used as a case. It is to be noted that the secondary schools in Nigeria are relatively uniform in terms of structure and administrative patterns. Generally, principals in these schools face similar problems.

#### *Population*

The population of this study consisted of all the 245 public and 95 private secondary school principals in Rivers States. This gave a total population of 340 principals.

#### *Sample Size and Sampling Technique*

A total of 298 principals or 87.6% of the population were selected for the study. All the 95 private school principals were used because of the smallness of the figure compared to the public schools. To sample the public school principals a randomization technique was adopted. All the 245 public schools were listed in small sheets of paper, neatly wrapped and placed in a basket. The wraps were randomly picked until 203 schools representing the same number of principals were obtained. The remainder numbering 42 schools were discarded. The 203 public and all the 95 private school principals produced a sample of 298 respondents.

#### *Research Design*

A survey research design was adopted and this involved administering copies of a questionnaire to the respondents and retrieving them on completion.

#### *Instrument for Data Collection*

The main instrument used was a questionnaire known as 'The Principals' Stress Inventory' (PSI) which was designed by the researchers. This was used to determine the sources of administrative stress that affect principals. The instrument considered the following stress factors; inadequate funding, inadequate infrastructure and facilities, poor organizational problems etc. These are consistent with the sources of work stress as noted by Otamiri (2000), Cooper and Marshall (1976) as well as the administrative problems of secondary school principals as observed by Egeocha (1985).

#### *Validity of Instrument*

The Principals' Stress Inventory (PSI) was subjected to a validity test to ensure that the instrument is capable of generating the required data. Colleagues in our University who are specialized in measurement and evaluation made valuable contributions in this regard. All their suggestions were incorporated in the PSI to enhance its validity.

#### *Reliability of Instrument*

In order to ascertain the reliability or consistency of the instrument it was subjected to a test retest method. Ten (10) copies of the instrument were administered on Principals not selected for the main study. The exercise was repeated after a two-week interval. The Pearson's Product-Moment Coefficient of Correlation was used to calculate the correlation Coefficient ®) as shown below using the formula r.

$$r = \frac{N \sum xy - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{N \sum x^2 - (\sum x)^2} \sqrt{N \sum y^2 - (\sum y)^2}}$$

where	$\sum x$	=	sum of the x scores
	$\sum y$	=	sum of the y scores
	$\sum x^2$	=	sum of the squared x scores
	$\sum y^2$	=	sum of the squared y scores
	$\sum xy$	=	sum of the products of paired x and y scores



N = number of paired scores

**Table 1: Calculation of Reliability of Instrument**

Variable X	Variable Y	X <sup>2</sup>	Y <sup>2</sup>	XY
25	20	625	400	500
22	18	484	324	396
20	15	400	225	300
18	17	484	289	306
16	13	256	169	208
14	12	196	144	169
15	8	225	64	120
13	6	169	36	78
11	4	121	16	44
8	3	64	9	24

$$\Sigma X = 162 \quad \Sigma y = 116 \quad \Sigma x^2 = 3024 \quad \Sigma y^2 = 1676 \quad \Sigma xy = 2145$$

$$r = \frac{10(2145) - (162)(116)}{\sqrt{10(3024) - (162)^2} \sqrt{10(1676) - (116)^2}}$$

$$r = \frac{21,450 - 18,792}{\sqrt{(30,240 - 26,244)} \sqrt{(16760 - 13456)}}$$

$$r = \frac{+ 2658}{\sqrt{(3996)} \sqrt{(3304)}}$$

$$r = \frac{+ 2658}{\sqrt{13,202784}} = \frac{2658}{3633.56} = + 0.73$$

$$r = + 0.73$$

### Data Analysis Procedure

The objectives, hypotheses as well as the data generated determined the statistical method used in the analysis of data. The Likert method of summated ratings was used. Each statement in the questionnaire was assigned four options. Copies of the completed questionnaire were decoded and the chi-square

test was used to analyze the data obtained. The chi-square test is used to measure the discrepancy between observed and expected frequencies. The Chi-Square formula is given below:

$$X^2 = \sum (fo - fe)^2$$

where,

fo = the observed frequencies

fe = the expected frequencies (Best, 1981)

The rating options are Strongly Agree (SA) = 4; Agree (A) = 3; Disagree (DA) = 2; Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1.

### Presentation of Results

The results of the study are presented below. All calculations are based on the chi-square formula as given above.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant relationship between inadequate funding and principals' administrative stress.

**Table 2: Distribution of Responses**

S/NO	Parameter	SA	A	DA	SD
1.	Inadequate fund allocation to schools	140	65	30	63
2.	Principals are rarely involved in decisions concerning funds	122	60	70	46
3.	Percentage of fees kept back in schools is too small	138	77	55	28
4.	Principals/staff salaries are not paid regularly	215	67	9	7

**Table 3: Summation of Responses**

Responses	Public	Private	Total
Agree	161	60	221
Disagree	42	35	77
Total	203	95	298

**Table 4: Calculation of X<sup>2</sup> Value**

Cell	Fo	Fe	Fo – Fe	(Fo – Fe) <sup>2</sup>	(Fo – Fe) <sup>2</sup> / Fe
a	161	150.5	10.5	110	0.731
b	60	70.5	-10.5	110	1.560
c	42	52.5	-10.5	110	2.095

d	35	24.5	10.5	110	4.490
	298	298			8.876

Number of Cells = 4;  $X^2 = 8.88$

degrees of freedom (df) =  $r-1$  ( $k - 1$ ) =  $(2 - 1) (2 - 1) = (1) (1)$   
= 1 or df = 1

$X^2$  critical table value of degree of freedom at 0.05 = 3.84

**Decision:** Since the computed  $X^2$  value,  $8.88 >$  the  $X^2$  critical table value, hypothesis No. 1 is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

**Hypothesis 2:** No significant relationship exists between inadequate facilities and principals' administrative stress.

**Table 5: Distribution of Responses**

S/NO	Parameter	SA	A	DA	SD
1.	Lack of library facilities	138	69	16	75
2.	Lack of laboratories	207	35	10	46
3.	Inadequate classrooms	143	34	72	49
4.	Inadequate chairs and tables for staff and students	96	35	24	143

**Table 6: Summation of Responses**

Responses	Public	Private	Total
Agree	118	71	189
Disagree	85	24	109
Total	203	95	298

**Table 7: Calculation of  $X^2$  Value**

Cell	Fo	Fe	Fo – Fe	(Fo – Fe) <sup>2</sup>	(Fo – Fe) <sup>2</sup> ÷ Fe
a	118	129	-11	121	0.938
b	71	60	11	121	2.017
c	85	74	11	121	1.636
d	24	35	-11	121	3.457
	298	298			8.048

Number of Cells = 4;  $X^2 = 8.05$

degrees of freedom (df) =  $r-1$  ( $k - 1$ ) =  $(2 - 1) (2 - 1) = (1) (1)$   
= 1 or df = 1

$X^2$  critical table value of degree of freedom at 0.05 = 3.84

**Decision:** Since the computed  $X^2$  value,  $8.05 >$  the  $X^2$  critical table value, hypothesis No. 2 is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant relationship between poor conditions of service and administrative stress of principals.

**Table 8: Distribution of Responses**

S/NO	Parameter	SA	A	DA	SD
1.	Allowances are not really motivating	122	46	68	62
2.	Inadequate staff and students accommodation	105	64	25	104
3.	Irregular promotion	134	56	10	98

**Table 9: Summation of Responses**

Responses	Public	Private	Total
Agree	106	70	176
Disagree	97	25	122
Total	203	95	298

**Table 10: Calculation of  $X^2$  Value**

Cell	Fo	Fe	Fo – Fe	(Fo – Fe) <sup>2</sup>	(Fo – Fe) <sup>2</sup> ÷ Fe
a	106	120	-14	196	1.633
b	70	56	14	196	3.500
c	97	83	14	196	2.361
d	25	39	-14	196	5.026
	298	298			12.520

Number of Cells = 4;  $X^2 = 12.52$

degrees of freedom (df) =  $r-1$  ( $k-1$ ) =  $(2-1)(2-1) = (1)(1)$   
= 1 or df = 1

$X^2$  critical table value of degree of freedom at 0.05 = 3.84

**Decision:** Since the computed  $X^2$  value,  $12.52 >$  the  $X^2$  critical table value, hypothesis No. 3 is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

**Hypothesis 4:** There is no significant relationship between insufficiently trained teachers and principals' administrative stress.

**Table 11: Distribution of Responses**

S/NO	Parameter	SA	A	DA	SD
1.	Inadequacy of trained teachers	138	68	46	46
2.	Inadequate remuneration to attract trained teachers	124	67	82	25
3.	Lack of development programmes for teachers	81	62	63	92

**Table 12: Summation of Responses**

Responses	Public	Private	Total
Agree	130	50	180
Disagree	73	45	118
Total	203	95	298

**Table 13: Calculation of  $X^2$  Value**

Cell	Fo	Fe	Fo – Fe	$(Fo - Fe)^2$	$(Fo - Fe)^2 \div Fe$
a	130	123	7	49	0.398
b	50	57	-7	49	0.859
c	73	80	-7	49	0.859
d	45	38	7	49	1.289
	298	298			3.158

Number of Cells = 4;  $X^2 = 3.16$

degrees of freedom (df) =  $(k - 1) = (2 - 1) = 1$  or df = 1

$X^2$  critical table value of degree of freedom at 0.05 = 3.84

**Decision:** Since the computed  $X^2$  value,  $3.16 < \text{the } X^2 \text{ critical table value}$ , hypothesis No. 4 is accepted and the alternative hypothesis rejected.

**Hypothesis 5:** There is no significant relationship between work overload and principals' administrative stress.

**Table 14: Distribution of Responses**

S/NO	Parameter	SA	A	DA	SD
1.	Too much work load for principals	117	63	57	67
2.	Principals combine administrative and teaching responsibilities	103	87	25	83
3.	Lack of adequate delegation of authority	95	48	64	91

**Table 15: Summation of Responses**

Responses	Public	Private	Total
Agree	104	67	171
Disagree	99	28	127
Total	203	95	298

**Table 16: Calculation of X<sup>2</sup> Value**

Cell	Fo	Fe	Fo – Fe	(Fo – Fe) <sup>2</sup>	(Fo – Fe) <sup>2</sup> ÷ Fe
A	104	116	-12	144	1.241
b	67	55	12	144	2.618
c	99	86	13	169	1.965
d	28	41	-13	169	4.122
	298	298			9.946

Number of Cells = 4; X<sup>2</sup> = 9.95

degrees of freedom (df) = (k - 1) (2 - 1) = (2 - 1) (2 - 1) = (1) (1) = 1 or df = 1

X<sup>2</sup> critical table value of degree of freedom at 0.05 = 3.84

**Decision:** The computed X<sup>2</sup> value, 9.95 is > the X<sup>2</sup> critical table value, therefore, hypothesis No. 5 is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

### Discussion of Results

The results reveal that inadequate funding contributes significantly to the administrative stress of school principals as illustrated in Tables 2 – 4. This finding is in agreement with those of Ezeocha (1985) and Adesina (1981) which assert that

the various levels of Government in Nigeria do not provide sufficient funds for the implementation of educational programmes. Tables 5 – 7 show the influence of inadequate facilities on principals' administrative stress. The relationship shows that inadequate facilities contribute significantly to the administrative stress of principals. This result agrees with the observations of Uzoeshi (1994) as well as Cooper and Marshal (1976) that inadequate school facilities is a potential source of school administrative stress.

The results of the relationship between poor conditions of service and principals' administrative stress are illustrated in Tables 8 – 10. The data obtained show that poor conditions of service significantly contribute to the administrative stress of principals. This finding supports the positions of McLaughlin and Shea (1960) and Uzoeshi (1994) that inadequate salaries and unhappy teaching staff are sources of administrative stress among principals. Tables 11 – 13 illustrate the relationship between insufficiently trained teachers and principals' administrative stress. The relationship is found to be insignificant. Insufficiently trained teachers is therefore not a critical factor that contributes to the administrative stress of principals. This result agrees with the views of Bakare (1984) and Oku (2002) who believe that emphasis on trained teachers may not be very necessary because the yearly high failure rates of secondary school students in Nigeria are not exclusively a function of poorly trained teachers.

The relationship between work overload and the administrative stress of school principals is presented in Tables 14 – 16. The result shows that work overload significantly contributes to principals' administrative stress. This finding corroborates the views of Lortie (1975) and Famojuru (1988) that work overload is a stress factor.

### **Conclusion**

In view of the results of this study the following conclusions can be derived:

1. Insufficient funds for secondary schools is a factor that causes administrative stress among principals in Nigeria.
2. Inadequate school facilities significantly contribute to principals' administrative stress.
3. Poor conditions of service is the greatest stress factor to principals with a  $X^2$  value of 12.52 against the  $X^2$  critical table value of 3.84. This factor produced the highest computed  $X^2$  value in the study.
4. Insufficiently trained teachers is not a critical factor in producing principals' administrative stress.
5. Finally, work overload is a prominent factor in bringing about principals' administrative stress.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are based on the results of the study:

1. Adequate funds should be made available to school principals on an agreed time frame to enable them carry out their duties effectively and without stress.
2. Quality education can only be ensured with adequate school facilities. Most secondary schools in Nigeria lack adequate facilities and this is a problem to the principals who are the administrative heads.
3. Service conditions of teachers should be improved to enable them be more committed to their duties and give less problems to principals. As a result of poor service conditions many Nigerian teachers have to be involved in other businesses to earn more incomes. The problems that arise from such situations place more administrative burden on the principal.
4. Although insufficiently trained teachers was not found to be a critical factor to principals' administrative stress, it is nevertheless important to have well trained teachers as they will make the principal's job easier.
5. With adequate teachers in terms of quality and quantity in place school principals must embrace the concept of delegation of duty to avoid overworking themselves and



be stressed up.

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